

Message Text

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EXDIS, FOR CHARGE

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1-2

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, UNSC, SF, PBOR, LE, IS, SY

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: YOUR MEETING WITH BOUTROS ON
MAY 26

1. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT BOUTROS REQUESTED YOU TO CALL AS
A FOLLOW-UP TO AMBASSADOR PARKER'S LAST TALK WITH HIM
SECRET

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(BEIRUT 2550, NOTAL) IN WHICH BOUTROS SAID HE MIGHT WANT
THE U.S. TO HELP PREPARE THE GROUND WITH THE SYRIANS IN
ADVANCE OF A SARKIS-ASSAD MEETING BY GIVING THE SYRIANS OUR
OWN ANALYSIS OF THE DANGEROUS SITUATION IN LEBANON. WHETHER
OR NOT THIS IS THE CASE, YOU CAN MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS
ABOUT THE U.S.-SYRIAN DIALOGUE ON LEBANON:

--WE HAVE BEEN URGING THE SYRIANS IN REGULAR CONVERSATIONS
GOING OVER MANY WEEKS TO APPLY WHATEVER PRESSURE THEY CAN TO
KEEP THE PALESTINIANS FROM CHALLENGING UNIFIL. THERE IS

SOME EVIDENCE THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE APPLIED SUCH PRESSURES.

-- DURING THIS PERIOD, WE HAVE ALSO EXPLORED WITH THE SYRIANS WHETHER THEY COULD CONSIDER DEPLOYING THEIR FORCES IN THE NO-MAN'S LAND ABOVE THE LITANI AND BELOW THE AREA WHERE SYRIAN FORCES IN THE ADF ARE NOW POSITIONED. WE RECOGNIZE, OF COURSE, THAT THE SYRIANS PROBABLY WOULD NOT CONSIDER TAKING SUCH STEPS PRIOR TO ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, BUT WE HOPE TO SECURE FROM CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH THEM SOME IDEAS ON WHAT MIGHT BE DONE NEXT. WE HAVE PROMISED THE SYRIANS TO RESPECT THEIR CONFIDENCES ON THIS ISSUE SCRUPULOUSLY.

-- WE HAVE ALSO SAID TO THE SYRIANS THAT WE BELIEVE SYRIA HAS PLAYED AN INDISPENSABLE ROLE IN HELPING TO PRESERVE SECURITY AND STABILITY IN LEBANON. WE HAVE SAID WE HOPE THE ADF WILL CONTINUE TO PLAY THIS VITAL ROLE WHILE SUPPORTING THE AUTHORITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT.

2. YOUR BASIC AIM SHOULD BE TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY OF THIS MEETING FOR AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF WHAT THE SECRET

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LEBANESE GOVERNMENT MIGHT DO VIS-A-VIS THE SOUTH. YOU SHOULD MAKE FULLY CLEAR THAT THE U.S., AS AN ESTABLISHED FRIEND OF LEBANON AND AS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIFYING POLICIES IT REPRESENTS, BELIEVES THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN ITS OWN INTERESTS WILL HAVE TO MAKE A GREATER EFFORT THAN IT HAS SO FAR TO SHOW THE FLAG IN THE SOUTH AND TO RE-ESTABLISH ITS AUTHORITY THERE WITH POLICE, INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, OTHER CIVIL AUTHORITY, AND MODEST TROOP UNITS. YOU MIGHT THEN TRY TO ANALYZE WITH BOUTROS HOW THE RISKS AND PROBLEMS COULD BE DEALT WITH ONE BY ONE. WE SUGGEST YOU MAKE THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

-- A GREATER LEBANESE EFFORT TO ESTABLISH ITS AUTHORITY IN THE SOUTH IS NEEDED SO THAT THE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS, WHICH HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED CASUALTIES, WILL REMAIN COMMITTED TO UNIFIL, ITS MANDATE, AND THE OBJECTIVES OF RES 425. WHAT WE MUST FOCUS ON ARE PRAGMATIC MEANS TO BRING THIS ABOUT WHILE MINIMIZING THE RISKS THAT HAVE BEEN MENTIONED BY THE LEBANESE TO THE UN, THE U.S., AND OTHERS.

-- WE HAVE DISCUSSED INFORMALLY WITH PEOPLE SERVING IN UNIFIL WHETHER THE THREE LEBANESE ARMY COMPANIES MENTIONED IN EARLIER EXCHANGES COULD BE POSITIONED, PERHAPS NOT IN FRONT LINE POSITIONS, BUT IN AREAS WHERE THE RISKS FROM PALESTINIAN CHALLENGES WILL BE LESS. WE BELIEVE THIS IS FEASIBLE AND THAT THE UNIFIL AUTHORITIES

COULD BE PERSUADED TO MAKE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS.

-- WE RECOGNIZE LEBANESE CONCERNS THAT, IN TRAVELING TO THE SOUTH, SUCH UNITS COULD BE CHALLENGED MILITARILY BY THE PALESTINIANS. WE ARE PREPARED TO DEVELOP, IN COOPERATION WITH UNIFIL, MEANS OF OVERCOMING THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM (E.G., BRINGING THE TROOPS BY SEA TO LANDING BEACHES BELOW TYRE, OR BY HELICOPTER, OR IN THE COMPANY OF UNIFIL ARMED CONVOYS, OR IN THE COMPANY OF SECRET

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SYRIAN TROOPS. FYI: ON AN EARLIER OCCASION, KHOURY DISMISSED A SEALIFT POSSIBILITY. WHILE IT MAY BE INFEASIBLE, DON'T LET BOUTROS SHRUG OFF ANY OF THE ALTERNATIVE MEANS WE MENTIONED WITHOUT PINNING HIM DOWN ON PRECISE OBJECTIONS. LANDING CRAFT MIGHT BE FOUND. HELICOPTERS MIGHT BE FOUND. WE ARE CONFIDENT A SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND SOMEHOW, EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NOT ACTIVELY EXPLORED ALL POSSIBILITIES. END FYI.

-- IF BOUTROS SAYS THAT THE UNITS CANNOT BE SUPPLIED LOGISTICALLY WITH SAFETY, POINT OUT THAT MEANS SIMILAR TO THOSE FOR BRINGING THE LEBANESE TROOPS TO THE SOUTH MIGHT BE EMPLOYED. UNIFIL CONVOYS ARE TRAVELING REGULARLY FROM BEIRUT TO THE SOUTH, FOR EXAMPLE, AND LEBANESE SUPPLIES THEORETICALLY COULD BE INCLUDED.

-- IF BOUTROS ARGUES THAT TROOPS SENT TO THE SOUTH MIGHT SPLIT APART, WITH SOME MEN JOINING HADDAD AND OTHERS THE LEBANESE LEFTISTS, SAY TO HIM THAT WE BELIEVE THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE HADDAD SITUATION SOONER OR LATER. COULD THE ANSWER BE TO SEND A SENIOR TRUSTED OFFICER TO LEAD THE THREE COMPANIES AND SIMULTANEOUSLY WORK OUT THE INEVITABLE PRAGMATIC ARRANGEMENTS WITH HADDAD AND HIS FORCES? ISN'T IT TRUE THAT THE LEBANESE INTEND TO RE-INTEGRATE AT LEAST SOME OF HADDAD'S FORCES INTO THE NEW ARMY? AS FOR DESERTING TO THE LEBANESE ARAB ARMY, ETC., SAY FLATLY WE ARE SURE GOVERNMENT COULD SOMEHOW COLLECT SOME MORE TRUSTWORTHY TROOPS. IF NOT, LEBANESE SITUATION IS WORSE THAN WE SUSPECTED. IF 300 TROOPS ARE TOO RISKY, WHY NOT CONSIDER 100? OR SEND THREE COMPANIES IN STAGES.

-- IF BOUTROS SAYS THAT PALESTINIAN-LAF CLASHES IN SOUTH SECRET

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LEBANON WILL RESULT IN FIGHTING IN BEIRUT AND SET IN MOTION DISINTEGRATIVE FORCES, SAY TO HIM THAT EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT FIGHTING IN BEIRUT COULD BREAK OUT FOR ANY OF A NUMBER OF STILL PRESENT PROVOCATIONS AND REASONS.

WHILE THERE ARE RISKS IN SENDING TROOPS TO THE SOUTH, THERE ARE ALSO GREAT POTENTIAL GAINS IN TERMS OF THE DOMESTIC LEBANESE SITUATION. A REASONABLE DEGREE OF LEBANESE SUCCESS IN THE SOUTH WOULD SHOW THE SHIA MUSLIMS IN PARTICULAR, BUT ALSO THE SUNNIS, THAT THE NEW ARMY, EVEN WHILE LED MAINLY BY CHRISTIAN OFFICERS, IS BEING BUILT FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL LEBANESE COMMUNITIES. IT WOULD ALSO SHOW THAT THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT CAN BE BOLD AND TAKE CHANCES. THIS COULD HAVE IMPORTANT SPILLOVER EFFECTS.

-- DRAWING ON EARLIER GUIDANCE, IMPRESS UPON BOUTROS OUR

CONVICTION THAT UNIFIL'S MANDATE IS ADEQUATELY FLEXIBLE AND BROAD TO BE EFFECTIVE. UNIFIL HAS CARRIED OUT ITS PRIMARY TASK WITH GREAT EFFECTIVENESS. IT HAS DISPLAYED A CAPACITY TO BE FIRM AND INSPIRE RESPECT.

-- IN THIS CONNECTION, WE DO NOT NECESSARILY ENVISAGE THAT THE MISSION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY UNITS SENT SOUTH WOULD NECESSARILY BE IDENTICAL WITH UNIFIL'S MANDATE. THE LEBANESE UNITS WOULD BE THERE TO BEGIN AND ACCELERATE THE PROCESS OF EXTENDING GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY IN ALL CIVIL FIELDS, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES AND ALREADY EXISTING PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HOMELESS IN REBUILDING HOMES. THIS IS WHY MORE POLICE OR INTERNAL SECURITY UNITS ARE ALSO NEEDED.

-- THE UNIFIL OPERATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON CAN WORK TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT IN ITS SEARCH FOR A NATIONAL CONSENSUS AND FOR WAYS TO DEAL WITH THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. THE UN AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ARE COMMITTED TO AN IMPORTANT EFFORT IN SOUTH LEBANON AND ARE
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THEREFORE FOCUSED ON THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS POSED TO LEBANON BY THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE TO A GREATER DEGREE THAN EVER BEFORE. THIS COULD ONLY BE HELPFUL TO LEBANON'S INTERESTS. THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO MAKE THE PEACE-KEEPING EFFORT A SUCCESS, AND WE ARE SURE THIS CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IF THE LEBANESE THEMSELVES DO NOT SHOULDER THEIR SHARE.

-- IF BOUTROS PERSISTS IN ARGUING THAT ARMY UNITS CANNOT BE SENT, YOU SHOULD PRESS HIM TO INDICATE WHEN CONDITIONS MIGHT PERMIT SUCH DEPLOYMENT. POINT OUT IN THIS CONNECTION THAT HE AND A GREAT MANY OTHERS HAD BEEN SKEPTICAL THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD EVER ANNOUNCE THEIR FINAL WITHDRAWAL. WE BELIEVE THEY WILL PULL OUT FINALLY BY JUNE 13, AND THIS WILL REMOVE ONE SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE TO A MORE IMPORTANT LEBANESE GOVERNMENT PRESENCE IN THE SOUTH.

-- MAKE CLEAR THAT, IN ORDER FOR US TO BE EFFECTIVE IN SUPPORTING THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND ITS OBJECTIVES, WE MUST UNDERSTAND FULLY THE NATURE OF THE PRESENT LEBANESE DILEMMA. THE LEBANESE, IT SEEMS TO US, HAVE BEEN TAKING A FAIRLY FIRM POSITION NOT WITHOUT RISKS ON ISSUES SUCH AS THE RELEVANCE OF THE CAIRO ACCORD WHILE UNIFIL IS IN SOUTH LEBANON. ARE THERE FACTORS OF WHICH WE ARE UNAWARE AFFECTING LEBANESE DECISIONS, SUCH AS A BELIEF THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST FIRST NEGOTIATE A NEW MODUS VIVENDI WITH THE PALESTINIANS? WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF

THE MARONITE LEADERS OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT?

-- IF THE LEBANESE HAVE DECIDED IN EFFECT TO WRITE OFF THE SOUTH FOR THE TIME BEING, WE SUSPECT THAT THE CONSEQUENCES
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WOULD BE GRAVE FOR LEBANON'S LONG-TERM FUTURE. ASIDE FROM A POSSIBLE UNRAVELING OF UNIFIL, AND A RETURN TO CHAOS IN SOUTH LEBANON, THE FORCES PUSHING FOR PARTITION WOULD GAIN A FREER HAND. SYRIA CERTAINLY WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD TO PREVENT MOVES TOWARDS PARTITION. MUSLIM SUPPORT FOR THE SARKIS GOVERNMENT WOULD ERODE, AND THE RESOLUTION OF LEBANON'S FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE HARDER TO ACHIEVE.
CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

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